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**SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

November 1985

Prepared by the Federal Research Division of  
the Library of Congress under an interagency agreement

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## PREFACE

This chronology is organized by region, country, and date of event. The date of event is sometimes difficult to determine because it varies from source to source. Some sources cite the actual date of the incident whereas others appear to use the official news release dateline. When possible, the actual date of the occurrence is listed.

Analysts contributing to this chronology are LaVerle Berry, Robert Handloff, Mary Louise Harmon, R. Thomas Lenaghan, Kenneth Liberstein, and Rachel Warner.

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East/Central Africa

Tanzania

05/11/85

Zanzibar native Ali Hassan Mwinyi is sworn in for a 5-year term as President of Tanzania, succeeding Julius Nyerere. The appointment of Joseph Warioba, a mainlander, as Prime Minister preserves the regional balance in the top political offices. Nyerere, who is expected to continue to wield considerable power as Chairman of the ruling Revolutionary Party, becomes one of three elected heads of state to hand over power willingly in the 25 years since most of Africa gained independence from colonial rule.

Uganda

00/11/85

Peace talks between the Ugandan Government and the National Resistance Army (NRA) that began in August continue in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. Both sides are optimistic that an agreement can be reached soon that will provide for NRA representation on the governing Military Council, and for merging the NRA's guerrilla force with Uganda's Army, thus ending the current state of insurgency in the country. A draft agreement is being drawn up that calls for an immediate cease-fire, a general disarmament overseen by four commonwealth nations, a new army composed of members from all ethnic groups and trained by British advisers, and a national conference to redraft the country's constitution. Unresolved issues include the exact role NRA leader Yoweri Museveni would play in the ruling Military Council and the exact number of seats that would be allotted to the NRA on the Council.

04/11/85

National Resistance Army (NRA) leader Yoweri Museveni announces the setting up of a formal administration in areas under NRA control in the southwestern part of the country, zones that the NRA describes as "liberated." This is intended as an interim measure to provide services, pending an agreement with the central government in the capital, Kampala.

08/11/85

A top Democratic Party (DP) official reports that Ugandan government troops, in collaboration with former President

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Obote's party supporters, have killed 50 DP officials and supporters in the last 2 weeks. According to the official, the deaths occurred in Kangulumira in Mukono district. He also charges that former Uganda People's Congress functionaries framed DP officials and supporters so that they could be killed and their property looted.

10/11/85 A gunman hijacks a Uganda Airlines plane on a domestic flight to Arua, 350 miles northwest of the capital, Kampala, near the Zairean border. The airliner, which was carrying 49 passengers, was diverted from Entebbe Airport near Kampala to Kasese, a town held by the NRA in the west. Motives for the hijacking are unclear, but the gunman appeared to be a Ugandan Army defector or a prison escapee seeking asylum with the NRA. Other accounts hold that the plane was being used to ferry arms and military equipment in the government's war against the NRA.

Zaire

10/11/85 A Swiss newspaper, La Suisse, reports that 6 of 59 illegal Zairean immigrants who were expelled from Switzerland the week before died after beatings and torture inflicted on them when they arrived back in Zaire. The pilot of the Swissair plane specially chartered by Zairean authorities reported that he and the police had been worried about a possible hijack attempt by the deportees, who feared for their safety in Zaire. As a result, all 59 deportees, including women and children, were bound hand and foot for the first half hour of the flight following "incidents" during embarkation.

Horn of Africa

Ethiopia

21/10/85 A Paris-based spokesman for the Eritrean Popular Liberation Front (EPLF) reports that its forces killed 1,890 Ethiopian government soldiers and wounded 2,630 others during an 11-day military offensive in the regions of Nakfa, Halhal, and Northeast Sahel. The EPLF also claims that two T-55 tanks were captured, three tanks destroyed, and a MIG-23 fighter plane shot down.

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Horn of Africa

Ethiopia  
31/10/85

Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) Chairman Mengistu departs for Moscow for what is termed a friendly working visit to the Soviet Union. Relations between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union, which were established in 1976 when Ethiopia broke off diplomatic relations with the United States, were strengthened by the formation of the ruling Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE) in September 1984.

Kenya  
18/10/85

According to reports from diplomatic sources in Nairobi, the two leaders of the August 1982 attempted coup, Corporal Hezekiah Ochuga Rabala and Sergeant Pancras Oteyo, were secretly hanged in July. Ten others, also convicted of participating in the coup, were executed a few days later. The sources say that the executions are common knowledge in Nairobi, although the local press has been silent and the government has refused to confirm or deny the executions.

Sudan  
00/11/85

The trial of Sudanese officials involved in the airlift of Ethiopia's Falasha Jews to Israel continues. The Sudanese State Security Tribunal hears further testimony regarding the prosecution of many Sudanese officials, including former President Numeiri and Omar Mohammad al-Tayyib, accused of complicity with the rescue operation. The legal proceedings, covered widely in the Sudanese press, are reviving anti-American sentiment among a mercurial public that still strongly associates the United States with the corrupt leadership of the Numeiri regime. They also provide an opportunity for the Transitional Military Council to rebut allegations from John Garang, leader of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), that head of state Siwardahab is merely a reincarnation of former President Numeiri.

07/11/85

Sudan and Libya announce the formation of a Military Committee responsible for the coordination of defense strategy and the training of Sudanese pilots in Libya. Following the Sudanese-Libyan military pact signed shortly

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after the overthrow of the Numeiri regime, the joint Military Committee reflects the continuing evolution of bilateral relations between the two countries. It also suggests the possibility of increased Libyan influence in the junior officer ranks of the Sudanese Armed Forces, and an indirect threat to the Transitional Military Council.

16/11/85 The SPLA launches a new offensive against government troops in the area of Kapoeta in eastern Equatoria, breaking the 19 to 23 October declared cease-fire. The SPLA, which has confined its insurgent activities primarily to Upper Nile and Bahr el-Ghazal Provinces, is seeking to broaden its support base to affirm that the movement is not dominated by the Dinka tribe, and to negotiate from a position of strength in the upcoming December peace talks in Khartoum.

Indian Ocean Islands

Comoros

08/11/85 Seventeen people, including the Secretary General of the illegal Democratic Front Party, Moustaphy Said Cheikh, are sentenced to forced labor for life for plotting to overthrow the government in March. Several other accused coup plotters are sentenced to shorter prison terms, and only one person is acquitted.

Sahel

Chad

04/11/85 Goukouni Oueddei, President of the opposition Transitional National Union Government (GUNT), orders the release of Acheikh Ibn Ouman, Secretary General of the Revolutionary Democratic Council, who has been held in protective custody since the crisis that shook GUNT following its reshuffle in August 1984. His release marks the beginning of the implementation of the Cotonou agreement, ratified on 30 August 1985 by the major opposition movements, which calls for their unification, and which is part of Oueddei's efforts to mount a unified offensive against the regime of President Hissein Habre.

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11/11/85 A reconciliation agreement is signed in Libreville, Gabon, between the Chadian Government and the Action Coordination Committee of the Revolutionary Democratic Council (CAC-CDR), a government opposition faction hostile to Libya. The Libreville Accord, which calls for amnesty for all Chadian political exiles and refugees, reflects President Habre's efforts to establish a dialogue with all government opposition groups, and to counter Goukouni Oueddei's offensive against the government.

**Mali**

21/10/85 President Traore meets with the Libyan Ambassador to discuss ways of strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries. The meeting seems to be part of a general diplomatic offensive by Libya directed at ameliorating its relations with countries in the Sahel region.

**Mauritania**

14/11/85 Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed Ould Minnih pays an official visit to Tripoli at the invitation of his Libyan counterpart, Abd al-Salam al-Turayki, Secretary of the People's Committee for Foreign Liaison. Their discussions center on Arab, African and international issues of joint interest. This visit is indicative of President Taya's policy, in contrast to former President Haidallah's more biased foreign policy position, of maintaining impartial relations with all neighbors, and a more neutral stance on regional problems, particularly vis-a-vis the Western Sahara.

**Southern Africa**

**Angola**

07/11/85 According to National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) reports, Angolan government forces are using toxic bombs, napalm, and other explosive devices against UNITA targets. UNITA claims that 73 civilians died during government bombing attacks in Cuanza Sul Province, which were deliberately aimed against the civilian population in revenge for military setbacks suffered by Russian, Cuban,



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and government troops in the village of Cassangue in October.

**Botswana**

16/11/85 Four people, including two children, are killed by a car bomb outside the Deborah Retief Memorial Hospital in Mochudi, 42 kilometers north of Gaborone. No one claims responsibility for the bomb. Since February, 17 people, including 9 black South African refugees, have died in similar attacks.

**Lesotho/South Africa**

31/10/85 Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) guerrillas, crossing into Lesotho from South Africa, launch an attack in the southern district of Quthing, near the border with South Africa, killing three people and injuring three others. The guerrillas reportedly fled back into South African territory after the incident. The attack comes after several weeks of tension between the governments of Lesotho and South Africa, following an LLA attack earlier in the month in the Basotho capital, Maseru, in which seven people were killed.

**Mozambique**

03/11/85 Two Jesuit priests, a Portuguese and a Mozambican, who had been kidnaped at the end of October by the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (RENAMO), are found dead in Lifidzi in Tete Province. The execution of the two priests is indicative of RENAMO's continuing campaign to disrupt the Machel government.

04/11/85 RENAMO guerrillas kidnap 10 people at Urban District Number Six, Zona Verde, in Maputo. According to government reports, the guerrillas stole food and cloths from residents before they were chased away by members of the people's militia.

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Southern Africa

Namibia

01/11/85 Major General George Meiring, the Commanding Officer of the South West African Territory Force, announces that the security forces in Namibia have captured 1,128 kilograms of explosives and 9,276 tons of ammunition from South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) insurgents so far this year. He also claims that the Kavango and Kaokoland regions are cleared of insurgents, with only a handful left in the Ovambo region.

13/11/85 SWAPO guerrillas attack Ruacana, near the border with Angola, with mortars, rockets, and small-arms fire. Six guerrillas are killed by government forces pursuing them into Angola following the attack, which may be the start of the Angolan-based organization's annual effort to infiltrate Namibia under cover of the rainy season.

20/11/85 Two bombs explode at a service station in Katimo Mulilo, Caprivi, in the northeast. The sabotage, probably the work of SWAPO guerrillas, is the first in Caprivi in several years.

South Africa

01/11/85 An explosion rips through the second story of a building in central Johannesburg, injuring no one seriously. The incident is attributed to the general unrest gripping the country. In another incident, reporters from the newspaper, Cape Times, are detained in Kraaifontein and held at the local police station where police confiscate four roles of film and a United Democratic Front (UDF) pamphlet after security forces moved into the area in an attempt to put an end to petrol bombings and stonings.

02/11/85 The government bans television coverage of unrest, defined as riots, strikes, and boycotts, in black townships in the

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38 magisterial districts where the state of emergency is in force, except with the permission of the Commissioner of Police. Curbs on newspaper reporters are imposed simultaneously, requiring them to report to police in emergency areas before going into black townships to cover unrest situations. Police are empowered under emergency regulations to prevent journalists from entering townships. The new restrictions on press coverage of unrest come after a series of attacks in the past 3 months on foreign correspondents by authorities, accusing them of unfair and partisan reporting on the rebellion in the townships.

06/11/85 South African police claim that 2 people were shot dead and 1 wounded in Guguletu near Cape Town when a police patrol was attacked by about 700 people with petrol bombs and stones. In Soweto, 4 days before, police arrested about 200 youths at an all-night funeral vigil for a schoolboy shot dead the week before at another funeral. Later, police opened fire on part of a crowd of about 15,000 at the burial, wounding at least 4 people.

08/11/85 The editor of the Cape Times, Tony Heard, is charged under the Internal Security Act with quoting a banned person, following the publication in the newspaper of a full-length interview with exiled African National Congress (ANC) President Oliver Tambo. Heard's arrest follows the prohibition, announced in the past few days, of travel abroad by any South African citizen to talk to ANC members.

14/11/85 President Botha announces his willingness to include blacks for the first time in the Advisory Council that is used to settle differences among the separate white, Asian, and mixed-race chambers of South Africa's Tricameral Parliament. Given the Council's limited powers, it is doubtful that the new reform will make much practical difference to blacks, although their inclusion in any political forum has symbolic value. However, black political organizations, including

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the moderate Inkatha movement, have indicated they will not accept appointments to the Council.

- 15/11/85 A clash between striking staff members and police at the country's largest hospital for blacks, Soweto's Baragwanath Hospital, results in more than 800 arrests. All reporters are ordered to leave the hospital grounds. More than 1,800 workers are dismissed and the Army is called in to run the facility.
- 18/11/85 Fifteen policemen armed with shotguns patrol examination rooms at a mixed-race school near Cape Town, arresting some students for allegedly faking examination papers to get around an order declaring illegal a boycott of the examinations. This action follows the killing in the past 2 days of 14 blacks and the wounding of 25 between the Ciskei and Transkei homelands in eastern Cape Province. Nine of the blacks were killed in clashes with police in Queenstown, a narrow corridor of white territory between the two homelands. Tension rose when police conducted a house-to-house search for suspected political agitators in Queenstown's adjoining black quarter. This major new area of unrest maintains the pattern which the country's political crisis has followed in the last 15 months of dying down in one region, only to flare up elsewhere.
- 21/11/85 Police kill 13 blacks during a protest march in Mamelodi township near Pretoria. During rioting the day before in Leandra in eastern Transvaal, police opened fire, killing four people. The rioting was the result of the serving the week before of 20 eviction notices, despite the reprieve 9 months before of forced removal of some of the town's black residents to the tribal homeland of Kwa Ndebele. A government spokesman claims that those served with eviction notices were illegal squatters who had moved in after the suspension of forced removals. Violence continues in the white corridor between Transkei and Ciskei.

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Southern Africa

**South Africa**

28/11/85 ANC guerrillas launch a rocket attack on two of South Africa's sophisticated oil-from-coal Sasol refineries in Secunda, south of Johannesburg. According to police, between four and six 122-mm rockets, which missed their targets, were fired by three black insurgents early in the morning. The three guerrillas were later killed in a shootout with security forces when their truck was spotted near the Swaziland border. This was the third ANC attack on the Sasol plants since 1980. In another incident, police clash with a group of suspected ANC insurgents in western Transvaal Province, killing four of them. Increased ANC insurgent activity appears to be evidence of an attempt by the banned organization to step up its guerrilla war in line with a decision made at a congress of exiled ANC members held in Zambia in June.

**South Africa/Zimbabwe**

28/11/85 A series of landmine explosions in South Africa near the Zimbabwean border in the past 3 days are blamed by South African authorities on ANC guerrillas. The South African Government claims the guerrillas crossed the border from Zimbabwe, and warns Zimbabwean Prime Minister Mugabe not to allow attacks to be launched from Zimbabwean territory. As a result, tension between Zimbabwe and South Africa is heightened once again.

**Zimbabwe**

01/11/85 Minister of State Security Emmerson Munangagwa announces that the government is recruiting and training paramilitary and people's militia to guard ruling Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) party leaders and commercial farmers in Matabeleland. Since 1982, attacks by Zimbabwe African People's Liberation Army (ZIPRA) guerrillas in Matabeleland have resulted in the deaths of about 101 ZANU members and 11 commercial farmers.

West Africa

**Ghana**

29/11/85 Government officials order the expulsion of four US Embassy officials, including two alleged Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officers, for activities "unacceptable and not

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conducive to good relations" between the two countries, according to Ghana's Foreign Affairs Secretary. The expulsion is linked to the collapse of an alleged CIA operation in Ghana that led to an exchange of captured agents 4 days before, and Ghana's wish to avoid a recurrence of the events that led to the detention of a Ghanaian national in the United States on espionage charges.

**Ghana/Togo**

28/11/85 Close to 9,000 residents of the Mamprussi region in the northeast flee to Togo following violent confrontations between the Moba and Konkomba rival ethnic groups. The clashes, which left 28 dead and several wounded, apparently grew out of a quarrel between chiefs of the two groups. This latest outbreak of ethnic violence follows a conflict a month ago between the Mamprussi and Kusassi during which 13 people died.

**Guinea-Bissau**

06/11/85 Vice President Paulo Correia is arrested following revelations of a plot to overthrow President Vieira. Others arrested for being involved in the plot are Tue Nambanga, Tank Brigade Commander, and Tagme Nawae, Military Police Commander. The Chief of the President's Private Cabinet is also detained for suspected complicity in the planned coup. Overall, about 20 military officers are arrested, most of whom belong to Correia's own Balante ethnic group. The revealed coup plot was a likely response to President Vieira's anticorruption drive that was launched in August.

**Ivory Coast**

10/11/85 In elections for the National Assembly, voters replace two thirds of the incumbents, continuing a tradition begun 5 years ago with the first contested elections for Assembly seats. Then, as now, Ivorian voters expressed their displeasure with the sitting Assembly by rejecting close to half of the incumbents. The voting is thought to reflect the voters' disapproval of official corruption in the face of continued austerity for the population at large and the slow pace of Ivorianization.

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West Africa

**Liberia**

15/11/85 Former Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) General Thomas Quiwonkpa is killed by troops loyal to President Doe, 3 days after he led a coup attempt. Quiwonkpa, who entered Liberian territory from Sierra Leone with a small band of followers, took control of the two radio stations in the capital from where he announced a change of government and his intention to hold elections. However, Quiwonkpa's forces were unable either to take the heavily guarded Executive Mansion or to effectively mobilize support from AFL troops in the Monrovia area. Units loyal to President Doe, mainly the First Battalion, retook the radio stations on the same day. President Doe uses this occasion to arrest key opposition figures, principally Liberian Action Party (LAP) members Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Jackson Doe, who will stand trial for complicity in the coup attempt. In the wake of the unenthusiastic response of many Army units, President Doe also is expected to make important changes in the AFL. Commanding General Maurice Zeze is dismissed and replaced by General Rudolph Kolaco, former Ambassador to India.

**Nigeria**

01/11/85 French Minister of External Affairs Roland Dumas begins a 2-day official visit to the capital, Lagos, that touches on relations between the two countries, between France and South Africa, and particularly on bilateral trade and French financing for Nigerian development projects. France has recently surpassed Britain to become Nigeria's largest trading partner and principal financier since most Western states have followed the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) lead in refusing to grant Nigeria investment credits unless it accepts IMF-imposed economic changes.

**Sierra Leone**

28/11/85 Major General Joseph S. Momoh formally assumes office as President, marking the long-anticipated transfer of power from departing President Siaka Stevens. Stevens' resignation occurred somewhat earlier than had been expected, indicating that his professed desire to retire as soon as possible was not just propaganda.

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West Africa/Sahel

Ivory Coast/Burkina

04/11/85 In a joint bid to diffuse tensions between Ivory Coast and Burkina, Burkinabe Minister of Economic Promotion Captain Henri Zongo visits Ivorian President Houphouet-Boigny. While the substance of the talks is not available, Burkinabe President Sankara later thanks Houphouet-Boigny for the warm reception accorded the Burkinabe envoy. Relations between the two countries have shifted considerably in recent months as a result of Sankara's heated, anti-imperialist, and often anti-Ivorian rhetoric.